

## BIOLOGICAL THREAT MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES

### **IF YOU RECEIVE A THREATENING LETTER OR NOTE**

RELAX AND REMAIN CALM - Although any threatened use of a biological must be treated as though it is real, experience has demonstrated that these are likely to be a HOAX. If the suspected biological agent is reported as Anthrax, be assured that it is not contagious, and that treatment is readily available if administered before the onset of symptoms.

#### **WHAT SHOULD YOU DO?**

- 1) If it is a letter that you have opened, set it down gently at the location where you first read it. Then retreat to an area that will minimize your exposure to others. Avoid contact with others when possible, and remain in this area. Public Safety officials will come to assist you.
- 2) If it is a note that you happen to find, LEAVE IT ALONE.
- 3) Advise a coworker in the immediate area what has happened and request that they call 911.
- 4) Request that the buildings ventilation system is shut down and turn off any fans in the immediate area.
- 5) Do not allow others into the area. If anyone enters, they must stay until instructed to leave by Public Safety officials.
- 6) Remain calm. Exposure does not mean that you will become sick. Health officials will provide specific information and instructions about the symptoms and effective treatment to prevent illness.

#### **WHAT SHOULDN'T YOU DO?**

- 1) Do not pass the letter or note to others.
- 2) Do not disturb any contents in the letter or note. Handling the object may only spread the substance and increase the chances of it getting into the air.
- 3) Do not ignore the threat. It must be treated as though it is real until properly evaluated.

### **IF YOU RECEIVE A PHONE THREAT**

#### **WHAT SHOULD YOU DO?**

- 1) Notify a coworker immediately to call 911. Do not use the same phone to make any calls. It may be possible to trace the call, and help a later investigation.
- 2) Ensure that notification is made to have the building's ventilation system shut down.
- 3) **Remain calm;** similar threats have all proven false and this is likely to be a hoax also.

#### **WHAT SHOULDN'T YOU DO?**

- 1) Do not ignore the threat. It must be treated as though it is real until properly evaluated.
- 2) Do not argue with, or antagonize the caller. You could make the situation worse.
- 3) Listen carefully to the caller so you can recall the details when asked by Public Safety officials at a later time.

## **WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT FROM A RESPONSE BY PUBLIC SAFETY OFFICIALS**

Fire, Law Enforcement, and Emergency Medical Services will manage the scene. People will be requested to cooperate by waiting in the area until an appropriate evaluation of the incident is made, and information will immediately be provided when it becomes available.

- 1) There is likely to be a decontamination (cleaning/washing) process performed. There is more than one way to accomplish decon. Generally this will be based upon the conditions present at the scene.
- 2) Personal contact information will be asked for by authorities in order to contact people after the incident, and provide them with follow-up information. This information will be kept confidential by public safety authorities.

## **THREAT PREPARATION**

1. Check the location and security of all fresh air intakes to the buildings ventilation system.
2. Prepare a map of the building to be used by response personnel if needed.
3. Assess the general security of the building:
  - a) Operability and condition of any video surveillance system being used.
  - b) Does the video surveillance system cover all the entry/exit points
  - c) Accessibility of any person to unauthorized areas, such as utility or mechanical rooms.
  - d) Operability of any public address systems
4. Inform all permanent tenants and/or employees of these guidelines.
5. Draft a sample alert statement that might be used during an event to get the word out.

This information is provided by the San Diego County Hazardous Materials Incident Response Team (HIRT), with input from the San Diego Office of the Federal Bureau of Investigation. It is provided to management and security personnel of public assembly occupancies for public information and planning purposes.